



Minutes from the regular meeting of the  
Asheville Downtown Commission  
March 8, 2009 at 8:30 am  
Office of Economic Development  
29 Haywood Street in downtown Asheville

Members Attending: Pat Whalen, Kitty Love, Byron Greiner, Dwight Butner, Brad Galbraith, Jan Davis

Members Absent: John Rogers, Jesse Plaster, Pam Myers, Guadalupe Chavarria, Peter Alberice

Staff/Consultants Attending: Bob Oast, Sasha Vrtunski, Stephanie Monson, Tom Gallaher, Jessica Bernstein

Chairman Whalen opened the meeting at 8.40 am

Review of Minutes

Brad Galbraith made a motion to approve the amended January minutes and approve the February minutes as presented; motion was seconded by Byron Greiner and approved by all attending.

Potential Buncombe County Office Relocations

The Commission discussed news that Buncombe County may relocate some of their downtown office functions to Tunnel Road or elsewhere. Members discussed possible constraints on the County to keep these offices downtown thus keeping their employees downtown and concerns regarding any planned removal of civic life that contributes to the healthy mix of people and activity in downtown Asheville. The Commission acknowledged that they do not have full information regarding the County's intent and therefore would ask County management before drawing any specific conclusions. The Commission acknowledged that they would like to work more effectively with the County. The County appointees to the Commission are Dwight Butner and Pam Myers. Plans for the County Commission to participate in the final Downtown Master Plan review and approval process provide an opportunity to re-open a dialogue with the County Commission on the importance of a healthy downtown Asheville for all of Buncombe County. Chairman Whalen suggested a request to briefly present at an upcoming County meeting. City Councilman Davis suggested that the (Downtown) Commission could consider doing the same for City Council as well.

Byron Greiner made a motion authorizing Chairman Pat Whalen to represent Downtown Commission at presentations to County Commission and to City Council in an effort to support the goal of keeping civic uses downtown. The motion was seconded by Dwight Butner and passed unanimously.

#### Vacancies to the Downtown Commission

Monson read aloud the names of the individuals being considered (by City Council) for the upcoming vacancy due to Chairman Whalen's term expiration.

The following motion was made by Kitty Love and seconded by Brad Galbraith: Recommendation to City Council regarding upcoming vacancy to the Commission that Council appoints a citizen who: has design experience and would be an asset in performing Downtown Design Review; possesses strong communication skills; and works well with diverse individuals and organizations. To that effect, the Commission recommends the following five applicants be investigated further: Joe Minicozzi; Abigail Emison; Harry Weiss; Michael McDonough; Chad Roberson. The motion passed unopposed.

#### Downtown Master Plan

Vrtunski noted the following schedule for final plan review:

- Whalen, Vrtunski, Glines and Bernstein to present at Planning and Zoning Retreat next week
- Final draft of plan to be available online March 24, 2009
- Downtown Commission to consider motion or resolution of support for plan at next (April) meeting
- City Council to start review process on May 12, 2009

#### City of Asheville Organizational Changes

The Commission discussed with staff organizational changes over the years that have affected the staffing of the Downtown Commission or staffing dedicated to assisting downtown's vitality; Commission and staff discussed possible changes to staffing in the future and requested an ongoing open dialogue on how city staffing changes could affect how the Commission functions in the future. The Commission would like staff to consider using an intern for some Downtown Commission assistance.

#### Upcoming Meetings

Formal motion to reschedule the upcoming April meeting from a City Holiday, April 10, 2009, to Friday April 3, 2009 was made by Butner and seconded by Love. Commission members agreed to check their calendars for a possible Annual Retreat date of May 15, 2009.

The meeting was adjourned at 10 am